Press release

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World Met Day celebrates local weather observers

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'Volunteer weather observers' - very small cogs in a huge, high-tech, sophisticated wheel of meteorology - are the theme for World Met Day on 23 March.

Often seen as the people who just record rainfall and daily temperatures in the back garden, they in fact make an extremely important and worthwhile contribution to weather forecasts and climatology. World Met Day aims to recognise their dedication.

Volunteers across the world have been providing a valuable service for centuries, some for more than fifty years at a time. Meticulously, they record precipitation and temperature data, barometer pressures, sunshine, wind and observations of general weather.

"International cooperation on a global scale is essential for the development of meteorology," explained Ruth Patton, International Relations at the Met Office. "Weather knows no national boundaries and in fact the national met services of all 185 World Meteorological Organization members exchange the observations."

Some enthusiastic volunteers are difficult to distinguish from professional meteorologists as they use such sophisticated meteorological instruments and equipment in their weather station.

"Voluntary observations are incredibly useful as they provide essential information from often remote and inaccessible areas," said Professor Godwin O.P Obasi, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization. "Their continued participation in providing weather and climate observations and expertise is proof, if proof were needed, that weather has a direct impact on daily life and professional activities."

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